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NEWS

Sen. Jason Lewis, Senate reinforce reproductive, transgender care protections amid federal threats

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Sen. Jason Lewis and the Mass. Senate have voted to reinforce reproductive and transgender care protections amid federal threats. FILE PHOTO

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis:

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Sen. Jason Lewis joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to pass the Shield Act 2.0 to fortify protections for those seeking and providing reproductive and transgender care.

The bill was passed with bipartisan support by a vote of 37-3 and adds a layer of protection for patients and providers at a time when attacks on reproductive and transgender rights are escalating on multiple fronts, including executive orders from the Trump administration, federal funding freezes for care providers, a U.S. Supreme Court decision ruling against transgender care, and other states bringing lawsuits against physicians providing reproductive health care.

“The Massachusetts Senate is committed to upholding our state’s values and protecting all residents from the dangerous actions of the Trump administration,” said Lewis. “The Shield Act 2.0 will protect patients, providers, and others from retaliatory attacks and puts people’s health before politics.”

Boosting protections that were first passed by the Legislature in 2022 as part of the Shield Act, this legislation prohibits state agencies and law enforcement from cooperating with other states or federal investigations into legally-protected reproductive or transgender health care provided in Massachusetts. Businesses that manage electronic health information would similarly be limited in sharing patient data connected to these services.

Additional provisions of the Shield Act 2.0 include:

• Allowing prescriptions to be issued with the name of the healthcare practice rather than an individual practitioner.

• Excluding certain reproductive and gender-affirming medicatio
the state’s drug monitoring programs and limiting third-party acces

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related medical records.

• Enhancing license protections for anyone providing or assisting in the provision of reproductive or transgender health care services.

• Protecting attorneys licensed in Massachusetts from removal or discipline for advising or representing clients on the topics of reproductive or transgender health care services.

• Forbidding insurance companies from discriminating against or penalizing providers who offer reproductive or transgender health services.

• Prohibiting courts from admitting or considering cases of abuse, neglect, or maltreatment brought against parents because they support their child in seeking reproductive or transgender care.

• Mandating that acute-care hospitals provide emergency services — including abortion care when necessary — to any patient who is injured or seeking emergency treatment. This measure comes in response to the Trump administration's rollback of federal requirements that obligated hospitals to deliver abortion care in cases of emergency.

This legislation is part of the Massachusetts Senate's Response 2025 initiative to protect the Commonwealth from federal threats. After passing in the Senate, the bill has now been sent to the House of Representatives for further consideration.

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FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in the 1920s, this iconic production is sure to leave the audience wanting more. Performances will

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Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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